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LETTER

FROM A

Country-Gentleman,

T O

His Friend in the City:

S H E W I N G

K

The REASONS which induce him to think that Mr. W—R is not the Author of the ANSWER to the ESSAY for PEACE, &c.

S I R,

UPON perusing the Pamphlet which you sent me, I soon concluded that Mr. W—R was injured by affixing his Name to it. Because it appears inconsistent with the good Character which I have had of him from your self. And therefore I intended to vindicate him, by shewing that the Author must be some other.

The Ground which induced me to this Sentiment is: Because, as to the Matter, his Mistakes are so gross, that they may be palpably felt; For tho his Common Topics, mostly, be true, yet they do not hit the Essay, but beat the Wind. And, as to his manner of writing: It has not the Accuracy of a Schollar, the Ingenuity of a Man of Honour, the Charity of a Christian, the Breeding of a Gentleman, or the Prudence of One who is not a Fool.

It's want of Wits, and even Seeming Discretion, was the only Reason which made me cease to suspect that a Jesuit had thrown this Bore of Contention: It being the common Politick of that Society to disappoint all Union betwixt Protestants, by assuming the Vizard of a Side. And therefore I determined my now Opinion, that it must be a little sillie Bigot, who, being Crack'd into a Fury with some disappointment, misapprehends the most obvious things; And in the manning thereof, seems better acquaint with Comedie and Scolding, than with solid Reasoning on the Subject that he treats.

I shall give you only a few Instances of many: In the First place, where he mistakes the Matter: And consequently all his Arguments fall to the Ground. And in the next place, give you some Observes on the Manner, how he behaves therein As to the First,

1mo. The whole Essay endeavours to go, mainly, upon the foot of the Gentlemans Principles to whom it was directed. (a) Who, being a Neighbour, it's presumable that the Writer of the Letter to him, knew best how, by his own Convictions, he might be brought in to the National Constitution.

But the Answerer overlooks this Consideration: And rambles out his own Principles: As if himself were the Person who was to be gained to unite.

2do. The Essay requires both a real Necessity, (b) and in Conjunction there-

(a) P. 3. 5. &c. (b) P. 3. 17. Margine, &c.

with, the *Judgement* of the Church, for establishing *Imparity* therein. Which is a double Barr against *Incroachment*.

Whence the Answer mispends its time, in proving that the Churches *Judgement alone*, without a Warrant in the thing it self, cannot make a Change.

310. The *Essay* expressly says that institute *Doctrine or Worship*, (c) may not be violate by *Man*; Notwithstanding of the necessity of Suffering. In which these do truly, and fully, attain the *End* designed by them.

So that the Answer runs, in vain, a long Proof; That no Force could Legittimat the Jews or Christians corruption of the *Acts of their Worship*, or diminish the Glory of *Martyrdome* in either.

410. The *Essay* asserts that tho nothing determined by GOD can be altered by *Man*; Yet GOD Himself does, (d) frequently superceed what relates to *Discipline and Government*: When the *Ordinary Rules* thereof cannot obtain their *End*; in extraordinary Cases of Providence.

Whereby the Answer deboards beyond measure, in bringing Arguments, for the most certain of Truths; That poor *Mortals* cannot Counter-act what is appointed by the ALMIGHTY.

510. The *Essay* left the Nature, and several Degrees, of *Necessity*; to be further searched into by Others. Having applyed it self, principally, to the present State of our Church, for Union of Judgement therein: And does give only some *Historical Hints* of the Circumstances of other Places and times, which is not only agreeable to the Person *addresed's* Sentiments; but likeways might show the Consistency of *Parity* among us, with *Imparity* in other Times, or in different Places, founded, thereby, on different Grounds. Tho this being *Matter of Fact* to us required a larger Disquisition.

So that the Answer is *Impertinent*, in condemning, from the Positions above-represented, some *Dissenters*, either here or else-where. Since they founded their Separation on other Grounds, (e) consistent with a Submission to a true *Necessity Ecclesiastically judged*, &c.

As to the *Second Head*, concerning the Answerer's manner of mannaging his Purpose: I shall give you only a small *Swatch* thereof. Such as

110. There are four manifest *Falshoods* in his very *Advertisement to the Reader*, viz. He *insinuates*, That the *Essay* makes all *Secundarie Laws* of Nature, and positive Divine Precepts, dispensible: That *Man* hath that dispensing Power of himself: That at most, it is satisfied with a *Conveniency*, without any true *Necessity* adjoyning: That the *Essays* Position (tho it was never laid, except with the Distinction and Qualities above-represented) is dangerous, &c. All which are *Misrepresentations*, and plainly confuted, by the true State of the Case above set down.

210. His *Rudeness* and *Ignorance*, (f) may appear; from his calling *ordinary Law Terms*; a *Conjuring*. His not discerning betwixt the *Style* that is necessarily more cramped, when much matter is to be couched in small bounds: And the Case where it may glide more smoothly in larger Tractats. His rambling *Flights*, about the Consequences that would follow from what the *Essay* asserts; All which quite fly over the Mark, and throw down only a *Man of Straw* set up by himself, &c.

(c) P. 17. Marg. &c. (d) P. 16. 17. Marg. &c. (e) Especially scruples as to *Worship*: Or, that there was neither *Necessity*, nor a *Regular Ecclesiastick Establishment*; P. 3. Marg. 20, 21, Marg. P. 12. (f) See the Passages related to in P. 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, &c. of the 310. This



310. This last may be likewise an Instance of his *Disingenuity* throughout his whole Pamphlet. To which may be added his Arguments against *Man's* power in altering Doctrine or Worship. His assertion that the Essay agrees with *Styll*: And others who make *no Divine Rule* of Government, even in *ordinary Cases*. His *wrasting Texts* of Scripture to impugn what is not said. And his *false reasoning* to evade what is adduced, &c. In a word, he *gathers* what was not in the field; And *scatters* what he found connected.

410. His *Reasoning* (even when he hits the Case) and *Prudence* are of a kind with his other Qualities. So he seems to insinuate, That the *Degrees* of Marriage (in the 18th Chapter of *Leviticus*) are not originally Moral: Whereas, otherwise, the Heathens had not been punished for contravention of them. He feigns particular Dispensations, to Examples of Necessity under the Old Testament; Without any Proof. He owns a *Tacit Exception* of Necessity in the Division of Property, and the Laws against Theft, as flowing from the *Nature of the thing*: But denies the *like implied Exceptions* when it makes against him. He insults, because the Text does not bear, That our SAVIOUR did eat of the Ears of Corn: Tho our Blessed LORD was *present* with, and *defended* his Disciples, by the Example of the *Shew-bread*, &c: He makes *no distinction* betwixt the Influence of *Necessity*, more upon *Discipline* and *Government*, than *Doctrine* and *Worship*, whereby he sets himself in a *separate Interest*, from most of the Churches that are or have been in the World. Which (leaving to rake any further in such a *Dunghil*) leads me, before I bid you farewell, to give you some of the Thoughts which at present occur to me about this *difference*, arising from the disparity of their *Contra-distinct* Natures, Reasons, Ends, and Objects.

For Worship is a *Special Homage* directed immediately to GOD alone. And it, with Doctrine, makes the *Essential* or *Fundamental* of a Church. The Design of Which Doctrine and Worship (the Glory of GOD) no necessity can defeat: For that *End* is attained even by *Suffering*. But Government, with Discipline, terminat, *immediately*, in the Conduct of Men; Are only a *circumstantial* or *bedge* about the other. Which Fence becomes *ineffectual* to its *immediate End* (the Edification of the Church) when the institute Form thereof is *obstructed de facto*. In which Case, if what other *Polity* is practicable, be not warranted, the *adequate advantages* of Government and Discipline are *lost*, in the *mean time*, till the institute Model can be had; Besides the *Evils* which follow, upon breach of *Communion* in Worship, which is supposed to be unexceptionably pure.

May not I, then, allude to a *King*, who, going *Abroad*, commits the Custody of his *Crown*; inclosed in a *Secure Chest*, to a *Keeper*: Which Depositat, tho he dare never *betray* it to an *Usurper*; yet, in time of Troubles, he may be necessitate to use a *less bulky* and *slender Case*, for carrying it off. Or to such a *Prince*, who gives the care of a *Garrison* that's perfectly *well walled* against *ordinary Assaults*; to a *Governour*: And the *Trustee*, on the approach of a *more than ordinary* powerful Enemy; raises *new contracted Out-works*, for helping to *Awaird* the present Strait. Suppose, likewise, that those Administrators had *Special Instructions*: And their *Master*, foreseeing that these could not serve in extraordinary Events, gave a *General Mandat* for doing all that should be *necessary* to the same end: May not the *Indetermined Powers* be exercised at *Peril*?

The *Jews*, during their Captivity; might and ought to have performed their worship, so far as not *astricted* to the Temple; But could not secure the same by the

the *specific Government* of High Priests, Levites, Sanhedrims, &c. according to their Constitution when at Liberty in *Canaan*. Neither did *Christians* about the second Century, and thereafter, while they suffered Martyrdom for Doctrine and Worship; *deprive themselves* of all Government, till the stop that persecution had put, to the Exercise of Primitive Parity should be removed. Nor are we to measure the *Necessities*, Natural or Moral, whereof there may be several Degrees; which have engaged *other Churches* whereof the Constitution is tolerably accountable; by the Rules of Logick or Metaphysics: But by the *Nature and State of Humane Pressures*, under the directions of the general Prescripts of Scripture; applyed by *Spiritual Wisdom* that seeks GOD's Name, and perceives the Duty of the Times.

So that when you ask by what Authority a Divine Institution can be Superseded in *one case* more than another? I Answer, That this may proceed from GOD Himself, who gives *Contra-distinct* Natures, Ends, Reasons, and Objects; to several things. His Will being manifested by these *Intrinsic Signatures*; and from the general Rules of Scripture; compared with the unavoidable Events of Providence: When the Design of Government and Discipline, which obtains in ordinary Cases, cannot be compassed without an extraordinary Remedy. And this is not a committing GOD's Word with his Works: But is only a discerning which of His Laws (the Reasons whereof determin their Extent) take place in the case of such Works. Thus in the Precepts against Blood-shed, there was no express Exception of necessary Self-defence. Nor in the division of Property, or prohibition of Theft, was there any mention of all the Exigencies that qualifie the same in Extremities, &c. And there is the like, or stronger Reason for the effect of a publick necessity, always under Limitations above-express.

I am afraid my Letter has swollen too much; But before I end, I beg leave to excuse my Counter-acting both my own Inclination, and the Temper of the Essay, in the Roughness, which the Matter itself extorted from me, towards the Answerer thereof. But 1. A common Enemy to both sides; in obstructing, advances to their Peace; by such unfair means; has not the Benefit of ordinary measures, no more than a Breaker of Truce; or a Banditee, in another Case. Especially considering, 2. That the Design distorted by him, was laudable in itself: Namely, to propose a short Scheme, which some might improve to a more perfect Idea; how Parity is not to be condemned for its Singularity, since it's so well founded in the Rule; without prejudice (which stumbles so many) from Universality of Imparity, it being likewise warrantable in its habile Case. 3. The Matter, standing thus; the clearing of a Peaceful Truth, or Defence of the injured Advancer of it, or the bringing to a Remorse One who may be too wise in his own Eyes; is what I thought not unlawful. But I protest against the least design of wrong to any particular Person or Party whatsoever: And that not only out of Principle, but likewise because I know, from the Air of the Essay, That it would grieve its Author; who I am perswaded, if he knew that a Good Man (however mistaken) had accused him; would be ready to say with Calvin to Luther, I will call him a Holy Man, tho he should call me a Devil.

I am



S I R,

YOURS, &c.

Edm<sup>d</sup> 1703